

The West's War on Critical Thinking



TRUTH11.COM

Jun 22, 2024 5 min



AmericanThinker.com

J.B. Shurk

Nobody enjoys being manipulated. I have never met anyone who remarked, "I'm so glad people cleverer than I tricked me into doing what they wanted." Yet we are all bombarded each day with messages from people and institutions vying to influence our thoughts and control our behaviors.

Subscribe

Television commercials push us to buy certain products. Politicians describe domestic and foreign threats in such ways that only they can provide necessary solutions. Religious leaders choose which doctrines of their faiths must be diligently observed and which ones can be casually overlooked. More open societies might be marketplaces for competing ideas, but the most effective salespeople within *any* society are the ones who know how to magnify their own messages while silencing others.

Given that this is the case, a society interested in protecting its people from manipulation would be highly invested in educating citizens from a young age how to use reason, rationality, and logic to filter truth from falsehood. Aside from a smattering of classical and religious schools that focus on how to assess information and judge its credibility, it is evident that Western educational systems have been designed with no such purpose in mind. Students are taught *what* to think but not *how* to think. They are handed bits of knowledge without first being provided the cognitive tools for acquiring knowledge on their own. They have no appreciation for how misleading rhetoric and faulty logic are used to produce spurious arguments. They have no background in philosophy sufficient to arm them with the mental acuity necessary to spot and reject propaganda. They have no comprehension of the linguistic games that are used to program their minds. They lack shrewd discernment.

What does it say about a civilization that generally requires young people to spend thirteen or more years in public school systems engineered to produce mediocre minds? *It should set off alarm bells!* When governments are in the business of dumbing down citizens, they are investing in future generations who will be obedient slaves. Or, if an animal farm metaphor makes it easier for a millennial “influencer” to understand, Western governments prefer easily managed cattle that they can move from pen to pen before sending them to the slaughterhouse (think: Ukraine). What they do not want is an independent-minded cow knocking over a fence and freeing the herd from certain death. Schools, like penitentiaries, are institutions for corralling large numbers of humans together, so that a mixture of indoctrination and punishment can be efficiently administered until most learn to “behave.” When Western education mimics Western incarceration, Western citizens should start to wonder just *who* the real prisoners are.

The U.S. Pentagon, the NATO military alliance, and Western espionage agencies spend a great deal of their resources influencing human minds. “Great,” you might say. “They should be actively shaping the opinions of civilians in adversarial nations.” Except I’m not talking about “winning the hearts and minds” of foreigners living under dangerous dictatorships. When I say that the military and Intelligence Community are currently fighting an undeclared war in what they call the “cognitive battlespace,” it is your mind that they are fighting to influence.

At a time in history when people from opposite sides of the planet have never been better connected, national governments have lost their monopolies over domestically available information. In the past, most *information warfare* was directed outwardly toward foreign regimes. Spies and soldiers spread *disinformation* throughout an enemy’s population in order to sow discord, breed mistrust, and weaken morale. Traditionally, information warfare directed inwardly at one’s homeland has been limited to war propaganda intended to do the opposite of foreign disinformation campaigns: *namely*, to forge national unity, foster civic trust, and heighten morale.

As technology innovation and a global computer interface radically transformed the distribution of information during the last half-century, information warfare specialists have had a constantly evolving and expanding battlefield through which to influence foreign enemies. However, as new forms of communication have given warfighters sophisticated means of conducting offensive operations from the relative comfort of office cubicles, these same technologies have enabled foreign enemies to conduct cyber-attacks, sabotage critical infrastructure, and engage in long-distance espionage rather cheaply.

One of the cheapest ways for militarily inferior adversaries to harm the United States and its allies is to reciprocate the West’s information warfare with versions of their own. Especially during times of social confusion and civil unrest (including race-related conflicts, mass shootings, and other politically volatile events), hostile adversaries flood online chat rooms, social media forums, and messaging platforms with false information meant to enrage Western citizens and turn them against each other. Foreign operatives can accomplish a great deal of harm practically for free. Weaker enemies continue to use such asymmetric warfare to great effect.

The U.S. government has responded to these novel threats poorly. Instead of defending free speech in the strongest possible terms — regardless of the intrusion of malicious foreign actors into the public forum — D.C.'s permanent bureaucracy has chosen to classify and criminalize speech.

We saw this un-American effort to censor communication go into overdrive after President Trump's 2016 victory. Obama falsely blamed Hillary's loss on an upswing of "fake news" and demanded that Silicon Valley take more responsibility in determining what Americans can post and read. To anybody who values free speech, this was an alarming turning point in American history. Had Obama been a defender of the First Amendment, he would have acknowledged that the answer to speech he dislikes is *more speech*. Instead of endorsing mass censorship, Obama should have embraced the town square as a quintessentially American refuge where competing points of view are freely debated and people democratically decide what they believe. When he and the D.C. Blob instead chose to target and eliminate information that *they deem harmful*, the federal government effectively declared war on free speech.

Remarkably, this is the third major front in the U.S. government's detestable war against the Bill of Rights in the first quarter of this century. In the aftermath of 9/11, the passage of the Patriot Act, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and the formation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence ushered in a new era of widespread domestic surveillance in direct conflict with the Fourth Amendment's requirements for particularized warrants first establishing probable cause that a crime has been committed. After every politically advantageous mass shooting, state and federal officials work to deprive Americans of their Second Amendment right to possess firearms. And since President Trump's 2016 victory, the Obama-Biden Deep State has worked to monitor Americans' communications; classify unapproved speech as "mis-," "mal-," or "dis-information"; and censor speech it dislikes in flagrant violation of the First Amendment's protections.

Time and again, the U.S. government tells Americans that the only way to protect them from foreign and domestic threats is to deprive them of their constitutionally guaranteed liberties. Even after years of brainwashing from indoctrination camps posing as public schools, though, such rhetorical rubbish is backfiring. Why? *Because Americans can sense that they are being manipulated!*

The most effective deterrence to the threat of foreign propaganda is an informed and intellectually nimble citizenry. But the only way to dupe citizens into accepting *domestic propaganda* is to repeat lies, censor dissent, and suppress the human mind's capacity to think. Consider this: if you viewed the American people's combined consciousness as a "cognitive battlespace" that must be conquered, would you ever encourage citizens to debate ideas or question authority?

Conversely, if you accept that the human mind is now the primary focus of global military planners, is it not true that revolutionary ideas will be the most important weapons in any war for human liberty? Speak. Resist. Think.

Image: [Source](#) [Edited]

Original Article:

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2024/06/the_west_s_war_on_critical_thinking.html

Subscribe to Truth11.com

Receive Articles By Email • Support Independent Media

 [Subscribe now](#)

Support Truth11.com • Make A Donation

- Or Become A Monthly Subscriber

TRUTH11.COM | Armed With The Truth • United We Stand